

E

467

!

D2667

Green, Benjamin Willian

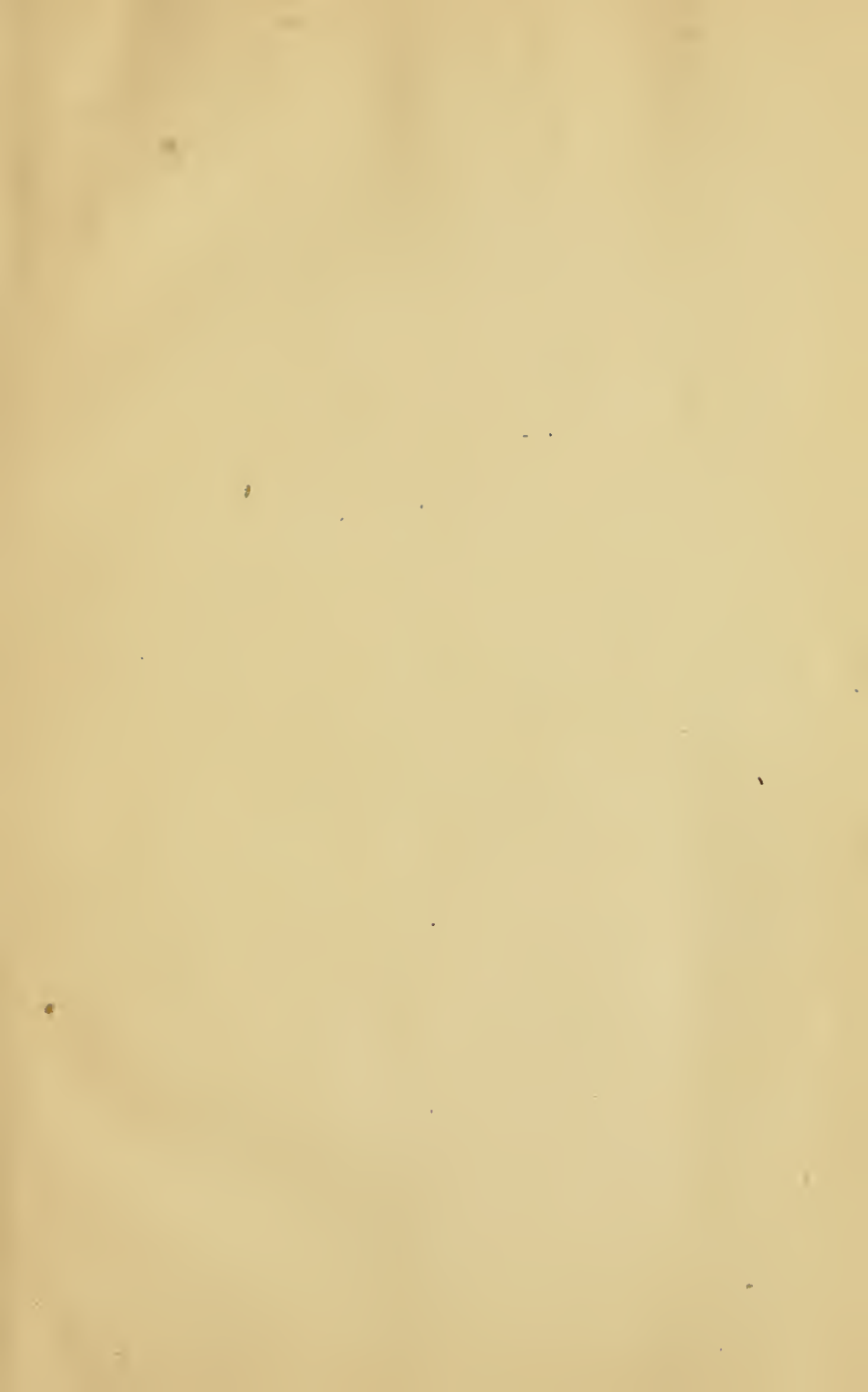
Speech on Jefferson Davis delivered.  
at the reunion U.C.V. held at  
Richmond, Va., June 1, 2, 3, 1915.

Little Rock, Ark., 1915.



Class E 467

Book 72667









SPEECH ON  
JEFFERSON DAVIS

DELIVERED AT THE

REUNION

U. C. V.

HELD AT

RICHMOND, VA.

JUNE 1, 2, 3, 1915

BY  
COL. B. W. GREEN  
OF  
LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

158  
881

SEP 10 1915

E467  
.1  
J26G7



## MR. COMMANDER AND COMRADES:

I have been assigned the very pleasing duty to address you at this hour, giving in condensed outline the character of the soldier we admire, the statesman we venerate, the Christian we emulate, the patriot without compare, the man we love, the President we adore—Jefferson Davis.

Would this duty had been assigned to abler hands, but I yield nothing to others who would do homage to his memory.

I cannot hope to add anything to that which has been well said by his many friends. The question which confronts me is what I shall leave unsaid.

His life and record is not only well known to you and to America, but is of international fame and interest; yet I would offer my tribute, however small.

I cannot in the limited time assigned me undertake to give even an outline of his life, but must confine myself to a presentation of the splendid character he achieved and which stands out on the horizon of American history as our wonderful mountains along the Western coast, in silent greatness and rugged grandeur, attracting the attention and commanding the admiration of all who behold.

General Bennett H. Young in an address at New Orleans, summing up the life of Jefferson Davis, uniquely said:

“The soldier, 1828 to 1835.

“The planter, 1835 to 1845.

“The statesman, 1845 to 1846.

“The soldier again, 1846 to 1847.

“The Senator, 1857 to 1861.

“The President, 1861 to 1865.

“The prisoner, 1865 to 1867.

“The martyr and victim of persecution as the representative of his people, 1867 to 1889.”

With such a varied and wide experience, his character at all times exemplified gentleness and unselfishness. He was unassuming and rigidly truthful, combining a life of patriotism, nobility and sincerity with an honest desire to serve his fellow-man which challenges the world's admiration.

As his character becomes better known and understood, the luster of a pure and great soul will increase in brightness unto the perfect day.

Having served in public life for more than thirty consecutive years, until 1861 found him with the highest honors his State could bestow (a Senator of the United States), there was nothing more that he could wish, and yet at the call of duty, the voice of his State, he laid aside his honors voluntarily in order to serve his people's interest. He was not at any time a secessionist. He urged on all occasions forbearance and patience when political wrongs were heaped upon the South. He said: "Remain in the Union, though the right to secede is constitutional; but it is not expedient to use that right. Contend for the rights of the States within the Union and under the old flag" (for which he had poured out his blood on the fields of Mexico); but when his State passed the ordinance of secession he tendered his resignation as United States Senator, choosing rather to take his lot with his own people as a private citizen. In order to show his position at this time I quote, in part, his words on tendering his resignation. Mr. Davis said:

"Senators, we recur to the principles upon which our Government was founded, and when you deny them and when you deny us the right to withdraw from a government which, thus perverted, threatens to be destructive to our rights, we but tread in the path of our fathers when we proclaim our independence and take the hazard.

"This is done not in hostility to others, not to injure any section of the country, not even for our own pecuniary benefit, but from the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights we inherited and which it is our duty to transmit unshorn to our children. I find in myself perhaps a type of the general feeling of my constituents towards yours.

"I am sure I feel no hostility towards you, Senators of the North. I am sure there is not one of you, whatever sharp discussions there may have been between us, to whom I cannot now say in the presence of my God I wish you well,

and such, I am sure, is the feeling of the people whom I represent toward those whom you represent. I, therefore, feel that I but express their desire when I say I hope and they hope for peaceable relations with you, though we must part. They may be mutually beneficial to us in the future as they have been in the past if you so will it. The reverse may bring disaster on every portion of the country, and if you will have it thus we will invoke the God of our fathers who delivered them from the power of the lion to protect us from the ravages of the bear, and thus putting our trust in God and in our firm hearts and strong arms we will vindicate the right as best we may.

"In the course of my service here, associated at different times with a great variety of Senators, I see now around me some with whom I have served long. There have been points of collision, but whatever of offense there has been to me I leave here; I carry with me no hostile remembrance. Whatever offense I have given which has not been redressed or for which satisfaction has not been demanded, I have, Senators, in this hour of our parting to offer you my apology for any pain which in the heat of the discussion I have inflicted. I go hence unincumbered by the remembrance of any injury received and having discharged the duty of making the only reparation in my power for any injury offered.

"Mr. President and Senators, having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it only remains for me to bid you a final adieu."

Be it remembered that Jefferson Davis was educated at West Point and at the expense of the United States Government, who owned and controlled that institution.

The text-book on the Constitution and Civil Government endorsed the doctrine of States Rights and States Sovereignty as held and understood by the South.

Why then should the Government of the United States condemn her student who had been taught this doctrine by her direction when he undertook to put that doctrine into practice?

Mr. Davis on his return trip to Mississippi was interviewed at every important railroad station, and at all such

points he told the people "to prepare for war, and that great odds were against us. That the North was fully determined as we were to fight it out to a finish."

"They had five times the men for war that we had. They had all of the manufacturing resources of the country, all arsenals and manufacturers of munitions of war. All of the arms then in arsenals. The regular army and navy. They would blockade our ports, and we could get no outside aid." He said: "We have no navy—not one boat. No arsenals, no powder mills. No manufacturers for war materials. No standing army. No munitions of war. We are an agricultural people, the North a manufacturing people. They can put three million men in the field and we only a half million. The result is inevitable." Mr. Davis never gave up the hope of a satisfactory compromise until the first gun had been fired. He contended that a guarantee of equal rights under the Constitution would restore the Union immediately.

On arrival in Mississippi he was met by Governor Pettus, who offered him a commission as Major General, and assigned him to command all of the military forces of the State. He accepted this commission and at once issued all proper orders and went to his plantation to put things in order for a long absence. He requested the Governor to buy arms and munitions of war to the full limit of the treasury, and all he could borrow upon the faith of the State; but the Governor thought an investment of \$75,000 a sufficient sum. On February 9, 1861, Mr. Davis was elected President of the provisional government of the Confederate States of America by a unanimous vote. Mr. Davis regarded the Confederate Constitution a model of wisdom, temperate and liberal statesmanship, and, as his election was unanimous and for one year only, he accepted, though he greatly preferred active military service. He was in no sense a candidate for the Presidency, and was greatly disappointed that he had been elected. He said to his personal friends that he felt qualified by education and experience to command troops in the field, but he greatly doubted his qualifications and fitness for civil office, and especially the head of the government. This shows his modesty and want of personal



ambition for place and power, but as the call was for the President of a provisional government for twelve months, his sense of duty demanded that he accept the place.

✓ In his inaugural address he said in part: "Called to the difficult and responsible station of chief executive of the provisional government you have instituted, I approach the discharge of the duties assigned me with an humble distrust of my ability, but with a sustaining confidence in the wisdom of those who are to guide and aid me in the administration of public affairs, and in an abiding faith in the virtue and patriotism of the people. The American idea is that government rests upon the consent of the governed, and that it is the right of the people to alter or abolish the government whenever it becomes destructive to the ends for which it was established." After his inaugural he wrote to a friend: "Upon my weary heart are showered smiles, plaudits and flowers, but beyond these I see trouble and thorns innumerable. We are without machinery, without means, and threatened by a powerful opposition, but I do not despond and will not shrink from the task imposed upon me."

The provisional government having expired February 22, 1862, Congress re-elected Mr. Davis to the Presidency. Again Mr. Davis was disappointed, because, weary of civil office and its burdens, he longed for the field where he believed he could render more efficient service and much more to his taste, but it was not to be so. This shows his self-sacrifice to duty. The closing sentence of his inaugural address was in the form of a prayer. He said: "With humble gratitude we acknowledge the Providence which has so visibly protected the Confederacy during its brief but eventful career. To Thee, O God, I trustingly commit myself and prayerfully invoke Thy blessings on my country and its cause." ✓ Thus Mr. Davis entered upon his martyrdom, pale and emaciated, offering himself upon the altar of his country, forgetting self, and to be the victim of events to follow, a willing sacrifice on his funeral pyre.

The Confederacy at first victorious, events followed rapidly tending to its final collapse. Yet Mr. Davis did not once despair, and stood a rampart of strength and courage

which was liberally imparted to all who came to him, and as the days grew darker and the clamor arose for a peace compromise, Mr. Davis (distrusting the outcome) sent commissioners to Hampton Roads to confer with Mr. Lincoln, but nothing was accomplished. Some have said that Mr. Lincoln was very liberal, writing at the head of the page, "The Union shall and must be preserved," and saying, "You gentlemen of the South may write the terms." This sounds liberal to those not in the strife, but to us of the South who were fighting for self-preservation and for constitutional government to surrender this vital point was to surrender all for which our armies were still in the field—Lee before Richmond and Johnston in Georgia, Taylor in Mississippi and Price and Smith in the trans-Mississippi. We claimed to be a separate government from that of the United States. For Mr. Davis to surrender our nationality would have been treason, notwithstanding the liberality of the terms. But Mr. Stephens and his associates made no such report to President Davis. If Mr. Lincoln made such overtures they were not conveyed to our President. Mr. Davis was greatly grieved by the condition of Southern prisoners in Northern prisons. The constant death roll was a great burden to him. The suffering of Northern prisoners in Southern prisons was also a grief and burden. He urged the officials of the North to send medicines necessary for their people in prison, and that they might send their own surgeons to care for the sick in prison, and that they should have the protection of the government and safe passport when they desired to go north. This was rejected. The offer was made to purchase necessary medicine for gold, to be used for the benefit solely of United States soldiers in Southern prisons. This was rejected. Exchange of prisoners offered by the South was also refused. Their prisoners in our hands were given the same rations our men received in the field—rough, of course; insufficient, it is true. Want of exercise, confined in close limits, necessarily caused death, and this grieved the heart of Mr. Davis and caused him to insist upon exchange, which was oftentimes refused. His humanity in this matter should have been met by a hearty response in the North, but was ignored.

In the course of events General Lee advised the President that in his judgment "the archives and all valuable property of the government should be sent south, for it was only a question of days until Richmond must be evacuated." The message from General Lee became known by the public and was exaggerated to such an extent that the President thought best to address the citizens of Richmond and quiet the excited public pulse. This was done in a speech by the President from the steps of the African Church. He said he still had hope of the final outcome. He summed up the remaining resources of the South, and saw there was no cause for alarm. He did not doubt success, though we had met great losses, but there was no cause for fear. Thinking he could be of more service if not burdened with the care of his family in the event the city must be given up, he sent his wife and children south. He had about \$100 in gold and gave his wife \$95 of that. Mrs. Davis wanted to take with her their store of family groceries, for fear they could not buy needed things south, but the President refused to permit this, sending all they had on hand to the hospitals for the sick and wounded of our army.

As hope died out in the breast of the rank and file of the army, the courage of the President rose, and he became fertile in expedients to supply deficiencies. He was calm in all of the turmoil and confusion of evacuating the capital and removal of the archives and valuables. One after another of his trusted lieutenants was killed. The army under Lee was depleted by death, wounds and want of sustenance, while the enemy was constantly being reinforced. General Lee wired Mr. Davis that "he could no longer hold Petersburg, and would move out that night; therefore, Richmond must be given up at once." On Sunday, April 2nd, while in St. Paul's Church, General Lee's telegram was handed Mr. Davis. He quietly left the church and went to his office and called for the heads of departments and ordered removal that night. The news soon reached the people of the city. Mr. Davis admitted the facts, but was hopeful, and said: "This is only one of the exigencies of war. We will come back." The people responded, "If it requires the sacrifice of Richmond, we are content." He left the city that night

for Danville, Va. On April 6th he wrote his wife from Danville: "I have heard from General Lee and will conform my movements to that of the army. Will make this place headquarters for the time." It was Lee's intention to form a junction with the army of Johnston at Danville, but this plan was anticipated by Grant and thwarted.

On the 9th of April, General Lee saw that it was useless to contend further, as he had only 7,892 men and was surrounded by a well-equipped army of 162,000 men, and he sent a note to General Grant. The outcome was the surrender at Appomattox. On news of the surrender of General Lee, Mr. Davis went south to Greensboro, N. C., where he met General J. E. Johnston, who asked permission to open correspondence with General Sherman, looking to a suspension of hostilities. Mr. Davis in subsequent correspondence on the subject said:

"The first conference of the cabinet after leaving Richmond was held at Greensboro, N. C., and General Joseph S. Johnston was present by request.

"General Johnston expressed a desire to open a correspondence with General Sherman with a view to suspend hostilities, and thereby to permit the civil authorities to enter into needful arrangements to end the war. As long as we were able to keep the field I had never contemplated a surrender, except upon the terms of a belligerent, and never expected a Confederate army to surrender while it was able either to fight or to retreat. General Lee had surrendered only when it was impossible for him to do either, and had proudly rejected Grant's demand until he found himself surrounded and his line of retreat cut off. I was not hopeful of negotiations between the civil authorities of the United States and those of the Confederacy, believing that, even if Sherman should agree to such a proposition, his government would not ratify it. After having distinctly announced my opinions, I yielded to the judgment of my constitutional advisers and consented to permit General Johnston to hold a conference with General Sherman.

"General Johnston left for his army headquarters and I, expecting that he would soon take up his line of retreat (which his superiority in cavalry would protect from har-



assing pursuit), proceeded with my cabinet and staff to Charlotte, N. C. On the way a dispatch was received from General Johnston stating that General Sherman had agreed to a conference, and asking that the Secretary of War, General Breckinridge, should return to co-operate in it.

"When we arrived in Charlotte, on April 18th, we received a telegram announcing the assassination of President Lincoln. A vindictive policy speedily substituted that of Mr. Lincoln, which was kindly and liberal.

"I notified General Johnston that I approved his action in articles signed by him and General Sherman, but doubted approval by the United States Government. The agreement was rejected and the terms of surrender made by General Grant and Lee were substituted.

"General Lee had succumbed to the inevitable. Some persons, with probably a desire to pay a weak tribute to Lee's kind heart, or to rob Grant of his claim to magnanimity in the matter of the surrender, have said that General Lee had only surrendered to stop the effusion of blood.

"This is not true. General Lee had no weakness where his plain duty was concerned. He surrendered to overwhelming force and insurmountable difficulties. The surrender of General Johnston was a different affair. His line of retreat, as chosen by himself through South Carolina, was open and supplies were placed upon it at various points. He had a large force, of which over 36,000 were paroled at Greensboro, N. C. We had other forces in the field, and we were certainly in a position to make continued resistance. This was all the more important, as such a course would have been of service in securing better terms in bringing the war to an end.

"On May 8th, General Richard Taylor agreed with General Canby for the surrender of the land and naval forces in Mississippi and Alabama on terms similar to those made between Johnston and Sherman.

"On May 26th, the Chiefs of Staff of Generals Kirby Smith and Canby arranged similar terms for the surrender of the troops in the Trans-Mississippi Department."

Mr. M. H. Clarke, of Mr. Davis' staff, said: "I came out of Richmond with him as confidential clerk of the Execu-

tive Office, in charge of the office papers and a member of his military family, his cabinet and staff; and I was close to his person until he parted with me near Sandersville, Ga., and sent me on in charge of our wagon train. His purpose was to join his wife in her travels South.

"Thus daily and nightly he was under my eyes, and I watched over him with affectionate and earnest solicitude.

"On the retreat (if so leisurely a retirement could be so called) I saw an organized government disintegrate and fall to pieces little by little, until there was only left a single member of the Cabinet, his Private Secretary, a few members of his staff, a few guides and servants to represent what had been a powerful government which had sustained itself against the soldiery of all nations of the earth. Under these unfortunate circumstances his great resources of mind and heart shone out most brilliantly. He was calm, self-poised, giving way to no petulance of temper at discomfort, advising and consoling, laying aside all thought of self, planning and doing what was best, not only for our unhappy and despairing people, but uttering gentle, sweet words of consolation and wise advice to every family where he entered as guest. He filled my own distressed heart so full of emotions of love and admiration that it could hardly contain them.

"To me he then appeared incomparably grander in the nobleness of his great heart and head than when he reviewed victorious armies returning from well-won fields.

"I could give many touching incidents of evenings around the fireside or noonday halts for rest and refreshment, of little children taken on his knee, of tender, comforting answers to eager, breathless questions. He left every family sanctified by his blessed presence, adding his household words to their treasured memories. 'Here was where he sat; here he slept; he said this and that.' Along the route he gave pleasant anecdotes and reminiscences to cheer the weary, anxious hours during those long days from April 2nd to May 6th. Thoughtful of all details, he gave directions about the horses, how best to feed and care for them, remedies for the sick ones, how to cross the rivers, and was watchful of all. He was the father and comforter, while still the leader and director of affairs.

"Through all these scenes the real man shone out and dignified the mantle of his office. I thank God it was given to me to see him as I did, and to have embalmed in my heart such sweet and precious memories of our great chief.

"To me, the last Confederate officer on duty, he gave the great reward and honor of two personal visits to my home."

After leaving Charlotte, a friend of Mr. Davis said they stopped for the night at Salisbury, where he was entertained by an Episcopal clergyman, and at breakfast the little daughter of eight years of the host came crying to Mr. Davis and said, "Oh, sir, Mr. Lincoln is coming and will kill all of us."

Mr. Davis at once laid down his knife and fork and said, "My child, you need not fear. Mr. Lincoln is a good man and does not want to kill anyone, and certainly not a sweet little girl." The child was pacified. He said to his host that he regretted the assassination of Mr. Lincoln and considered it a great catastrophe. "Mr. Lincoln was a much better man than Mr. Johnson, who will succeed him. This will go hard with our people."

From this place Mr. Davis went to Washington, Ga., and there received the first official information of the surrender of the army under General Joseph E. Johnston. He, at once, ordered the Secretary of War to pay off the soldiers with the silver on hand, and dismissed all of his military escort, asking for only ten volunteers to accompany him. Many volunteered, but he would only accept ten. With these ten men and five of his personal staff he left Washington. Mr. Davis intended to go West and cross the Chattahoochee and attempt to fall in with troops in Alabama and so cross the Mississippi River and join General E. K. Smith and continue the war on that side of the river, with the *ultimate purpose that the seceded States should return to the United States with all rights of the States unimpaired*. At Washington Mr. Davis assembled those of his Cabinet who were present for the last time, and formerly dissolved it, telling each member to look out for his own safety until more auspicious time should bring them together again.

Three days after leaving Washington he was so fortunate as to find his family encamped for the night with a

small wagon train, and traveled two or three days with them. It was his intention then to leave them and adhere to his purpose of crossing the Mississippi River. His horse remained saddled all night and his pistols in the holsters, and he laid down to rest just before dawn, but soon his negro coachman came to him and said he heard firing nearby. Mr. Davis went out of his wife's tent and he saw some of the United States regular cavalry. His wife asked him to leave her and to make his escape. His horse was hitched nearby on the road on which the United States troops approached the camp. As it was still quite dark, he picked up in the tent what he thought was his raincoat, and found later it was his wife's. But there was little difference in the two garments. His wife threw a shawl over his shoulders to protect him against the early morning air. He had left the tent only a few steps when he was ordered to halt, to which Mr. Davis replied defiantly, dropping the raincoat and shawl and advanced upon the trooper, intending to unhorse him and escape, but Mrs. Davis rushing up and throwing her arms about him, there was nothing to do but surrender. Many false statements have been made by his enemies as to the dress he wore when arrested, but Mr. Davis' soldierly character and well-known courage will give the lie to all such stories, and those of his household who were present will bear him out in his statements that he wore a gentleman's morning wrapper, which he had put on in the early part of the evening so as to get a more comfortable rest in sleep. I have personally seen this wrapper, now among the war relics in the State House at Jackson, Miss. It is a loose-fitting, gray wrapper, such as many now use in their bedrooms.

Mr. Davis and family were taken to Macon, and given comfortable quarters in a hotel. He was charged with complicity in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, and a reward of \$100,000 was offered for his arrest by President Johnson. He was taken before General Wilson at Macon. When shown the proclamation of President Johnson offering a reward as an accomplice in the murder of President Lincoln, Mr. Davis said, "there was one man at least who knew the charge to be false," and General Wilson asked him to say who that



man was, and he replied, "The man who signed the proclamation, for he well knew that I greatly preferred Lincoln to himself."

Mr. Davis and his family were taken by boat to Hampton Roads. At this place the family was separated, Mr. Davis was sent to Fortress Monroe and his family was sent by boat to Savannah, Ga.

When taken to Fortress Monroe, Mr. Davis was confined in the Gun Room or casemate, the embrasure of which was closed with a heavy iron grating and the two doors which communicated with the Gunners' Room were closed by heavy doubled shutters fastened with crossbars and padlocked. The side openings had been closed with fresh masonry, the plastering of which was still soft to the touch. The other walls were of solid masonry. The top was arched to sustain the earth of the parapet. Two sentinels, with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, paced to and fro across the prison. Other guards were in the Gunner's Room adjoining. The officer of the day held the key to the outer door, and sentinels posted on the pavement in front of it. There were sentinels on the parapet overhead. The embrasure looked out upon a ditch sixty feet wide, containing seven to ten feet of water. Beyond the ditch was a double chain of sentinels, and in the rooms adjoining the casemate were the regular guard when not on duty. Surely this was enough precaution to keep the prisoner, who was sick, exhausted and weak. His surroundings were enough to cause a strong young man to become ill. The walls damp, the food coarse and badly prepared. He was deprived of sleep because of the very hard cot provided him, and the constant tramp of the sentinels, and with the bright light of an oil lamp which did not add to the cleanliness of the room, the loud call at intervals of changing the guard and unlocking doors, soon produced fever and erysipelas. But this great precaution and cruelty was not enough to satisfy General Miles, and the War Department.

On May 23, 1865, the officer of the day, Captain J. Totton, of the Third Pennsylvania Artillery, came to the prison with two blacksmiths bearing a heavy pair of leg irons, coupled together by a ponderous chain, with orders from

General Miles to put them on him. Mr. Davis objected and resisted, but four strong men were called in and threw him on his back and sat on him while the blacksmiths welded on the irons around his ankles. Mr. Davis asked to be shot at once and so save the great misery he knew these irons would cause and the indignity to his person and people. He said his conduct on the occasion of ironing him and what he said to Captain Totton was misrepresented in the report made by Dr. Craven, for he was not present. All of his personal clothes were removed and he was given instead heavy, unsuited seaman's wardrobe. When he spoke of this to the doctor he was told that his clothing was then on exhibition or preserved as relics. For many days Mr. Davis suffered great anxiety as to the whereabouts and condition of his wife and children, but could get no news or intelligence, and he said this was harder to bear patiently than all of his personal ills and suffering.

On May 24th, Dr. J. J. Craven, surgeon for the Fort, called professionally on the prisoner, and seeing him for the first time, he described his impression of Mr. Davis in this way: "Mr. Davis presented a very miserable and afflicting aspect. Stretched upon his pallet, very much emaciated, he appeared a mere fascine of raw and tremulous nerves. His eyes restless and fevered, his head continually shifting from side to side for a cool spot on his pillow, and his case clearly one in which intense cerebral excitement was the first thing needing attention. His pulse full and his tongue thickly coated, extremities cold and his head troubled with a long-established neuralgic disorder. He complained of his thin camp mattress and pillow stuffed with hair, and said his skin chafed easily against the slats of his cot." General Miles, recognizing these facts and not wishing the prisoner to die, ordered another mattress added to his cot and a softer pillow, for which Mr. Davis thanked him. He also ordered tobacco furnished the prisoner, as he had been for years addicted to its use, yet he said the prisoner did not ask for it or make any other complaint. The prisoner could not drink the poor coffee furnished, and a better grade was ordered for him.

Dr. Craven advised the prisoner to spend as little time

as possible on his couch, and said to him, "Exercise is indispensable to your health." Mr. Davis then threw off the blankets, exposing his shackled ankles, and said: "Doctor, it is impossible for me to walk or even to stand with these heavy irons upon my ankles. Please examine and you will see that the skin has already been abraded in large patches. Can you in some way cushion these irons, for I am very weak and my skin is easily lacerated.

"You see that these irons are not needful for my security. It is clear to my mind that the object of General Miles and the Government is to offer an indignity to myself and also to the cause which I represent, and that cause is sacred to me, though for the time being it is covered by a pall and military disaster, and I wish to say, Doctor, that was my reason for resisting with all of my strength the indignity which they overcame with physical strength."

Dr. Craven reported the physical condition of the prisoner to General Miles, and requested him to have the irons removed as a necessity for the life of the prisoner. General Miles ordered the irons removed, and the inside guards were removed from his room, some days later, and, after this, permission was given Mr. Davis to be allowed an hour each day upon the ramparts for exercise. He was to have books and papers such as were approved at headquarters. General Miles came the first day and walked with Mr. Davis on the ramparts, but owing to his weakened condition he was not strong enough to take such exercise more than half an hour. Mr. Davis walked quite feebly, but held himself erect and proudly. He was still dressed in the seaman's coarse garb, which he now found oppressive as the weather became warmer. Later the New York *Herald* and other papers were furnished and some books—Bancroft's History was his favorite book. But much of the pleasure of reading was denied him because of the weakness of his eye. (He had only one eye.) He greatly longed for the privilege of a trial, and as this was deferred he became heartsick and wanted to die so as to be relieved of his suffering and torture. He slept but little. The lamp with its bright light was a source of great discomfort. Then the fact that his every movement was watched and he could feel the human eye riveted upon

him constantly was a refinement of torture, and he became afraid that his reason would give way under the strain. On July 30th, Dr. Craven found Mr. Davis very ill, nervous debility in the extreme, no appetite, complexion livid and pulse denoting deep prostration of all physical energies. The Doctor became much alarmed, for to have Mr. Davis die in prison before his trial and when it became known of the cruelties inflicted upon him, the verdict of public opinion would not be to the credit of the Government. The Doctor said of him at this date: "No patient has ever crossed my path who suffered so much himself and yet appeared to feel so warmly and tenderly for others.

"There was no affectation of devoutness or asceticism in my patient; but every opportunity I had of seeing him convinced me more deeply of his sincere religious convictions. He was fond of referring to passages of Scripture, comparing text with text, dwelling on the divine beauty of the imagery, and the wonderful adaptation of the whole to every conceivable phase and stage of human life.

"The Psalms were his favorite portion of the Book, and he said, 'There is sufficient evidence of their divine origin in the fact that only an intelligence which holds the life-threads of the entire human family could have uttered in a single cry every wish, joy, fear, exultation, hope, passion and sorrow of the human heart.' There were moments while speaking on religious subjects in which Mr. Davis impressed me more than any professor of Christianity I had ever heard. There was a vital earnestness in his discourse, a clear, almost passionate grasp of his faith; the thought would frequently recur to me that a belief capable of consoling such sorrows as his, possessed and thereby evidenced a reality and substance which no sophistry of the infidel could discredit.

"To this phase of the prisoner's character I have heretofore rather avoided calling attention for several reasons, prominent of which, though an unworthy one, was this: My knowledge that many, if not a majority of my readers would approach the character of Mr. Davis with a preconception of dislike and distrust, and a consequent fear that an earlier forcing on their attention of this phase of his character, before their opinion had been modified by such



glimpses as are herein given, might only challenge a base and false imputation of hypocrisy against one whom, in my judgment, no more devout exemplar of Christian faith, and its value as a consolidation, now lives, whatever may have been his political crimes."

Dr. Craven's tribute to the character of Mr. Davis is the more valuable because he knew him under the most adverse circumstances possible—prisoner charged with high treason—confined in a dungeon—fettered in irons—sick—weak—without any comforts—illegally fed—deprived of social intercourse—no books, no papers—a hard bed—a bright light all night and watched constantly by sentinels in his room. Could there have been a more severe test? Yet his Christian character and manhood was unscathed and forced the admiration of his enemies in words of highest approval.

After close imprisonment for two years Mr. Davis was released under bond, and immediately went with his family to New York, and, after a few weeks' residence there, he went to Montreal, Canada, and remained there until the following year, when he appeared in the Circuit Court at Richmond, Va., for trial, the indictment being high treason against the United States.

During this time Mr. Johnson, the President of the United States, was exceedingly anxious to have Mr. Davis tried for treason, but the bold declaration made by Charles O'Connor, of New York, that Mr. Davis could never be convicted of treason under our Constitution first aroused the administration to the dangers of the task it had assumed; and Mr. Johnson sent for his Attorney-General and requested him to look into the case and prepare a written opinion to be submitted to him and the Cabinet.

Pending the Attorney-General's opinion, the President requested Mr. Hugh McCullough, Secretary of the Treasury, to visit Mr. Davis at Fortress Monroe and to ascertain his physical condition and to make such report as he thought proper. Mr. McCullough did so, and he said in his report: "My interview with Mr. Davis was a very pleasant one. There have been few men more gifted than he; few whose opportunities for intellectual culture have been better improved. I had not known him personally, but I knew his

standing among the ablest men of the nation, and expected to meet an accomplished gentleman. To those who know him well, it is not necessary to say I was not disappointed and that I was most favorably impressed with his manner and conversation. He was not inclined to talk about himself, and what I learned of his treatment in prison was by direct questions, which he preferred not to talk about."

Mr. Johnson's anxiety to convict Jefferson Davis of treason was such that he employed the greatest criminal lawyers of the age to assist the Attorney-General in his investigation of the case, and then not being fully satisfied and fearing an adverse decision, he sent for the Chief Justice of the United States and held quite a long conference with him, and asked him to look into the matter on the part of the United States, as he did not wish to begin the case against Mr. Davis without some assurance of success.

If there ever was a partisan, it was Salmon P. Chase, but at the same time he was a great lawyer and an honest, fearless man. "Lincoln," he said, "wanted Jefferson Davis to escape, and he was right. His capture was a mistake; his trial will be a greater one. We cannot convict him of treason. Secession is settled. Let it stay settled!" Significant words, truly, from that source, and they explain the vote of the great judge who would have quashed the indictment against Mr. Davis no less than the question so often asked: "Why was Jefferson Davis never tried for treason?"

It is not necessary to state that, on Mr. Davis' arrival at Richmond from Canada, he was admitted to bail on bond, which was signed by Horace Greeley and Gerritt Smith. The case against Jefferson Davis was never called in court.

The following testimony as to the character of Mr. Davis is so well stated by men of known character and standing that I prefer that they shall speak rather than I.

The Rev. Dr. E. M. Green, now of Danville, Ky., was at the time Mr. Davis reached Washington, Ga., the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of that city, and the Honorable Alex. H. Stephens was a member of his charge. Some years after the war Judge Campbell, who previous to the war was Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and was spending some time in Washington, Ga., with his

friends. Dr. Green interviewed him. Judge Campbell was one of the Commissioners sent by Mr. Davis to Hampton Roads to meet President Lincoln and Mr. Seward, Secretary of State, in company with Alex. H. Stephens, who was also one of the Commissioners, and Dr. Green desired to get from first hands a statement from Judge Campbell as to the character of Mr. Davis, and said: "As the war is now ended and we have lost, please look back over the whole situation and tell me of the men who were ranked as our foremost at the beginning of the war and the unknown men who came to the front during the war, and tell me out of the whole who should have been President of the Confederacy." Judge Campbell's reply was not given readily, but in the course of conversation he had criticised Mr. Davis unmercifully, and had said he was self-willed, strong-headed, blind to his favorites, very partial to some and very prejudiced against others; and I named some of our best men, and he said decidedly, "No!" and, with great emphasis, "The only man in the Southern Confederacy who should have been President was Jefferson Davis." Dr. Green reminded him of his criticism upon Mr. Davis, and he said: "All that I have said about Mr. Davis is true, but we had no better man for President in the South. He was chivalrous and brave. He was a soldier and statesman, a born ruler and leader of men. He had in him more of the elements of success and did more for us than any other man could have done. When we consider the odds against us and all of the world opposed to us, our ultimate failure was inevitable, but Mr. Davis kept the Confederacy going for four years, and nobody else on earth could have accomplished this feat of civil and military strategy." He said, further, that "if every man in the South had been as true to the cause as was Jefferson Davis; if every man had accomplished his full duty as faithfully, there never would have been a Lost Cause, nor a furred Confederate flag"; but, after all, let us not forget that success does not always consist in achieving the purpose had in view. If we have not gained our cause, we have immortalized it. Devotion sanctifies and heroic service ennobles; defeat chastens; it is something to have lived so as to have one's self-respect and to command respect from others. Of all the men of all ages

there was none nobler and truer than Jefferson Davis, and may I add, also, his battle-scarred veterans of the Lost Cause.

Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, in an interview with his pastor, Dr. Green, said: "You are advised that I was not very friendly and in no ways chummy with Mr. Davis, but I wish to say he was the bravest and most courageous man I ever knew. He was absolutely without fear. I think real courage will take into account danger, but Mr. Davis had no such feeling. He was absolutely indifferent to personal danger." Mr. Stephens said, to illustrate: "When Richmond was to be evacuated a great many persons called upon Mr. Davis to know the situation of the Southern Confederacy at this crucial time, and Mr. Davis, not being able to see every one and to talk with them, announced that he would meet the citizens at 8 o'clock at night and from the steps of the African Church, which occupied a commanding and open position, he would speak to them. I determined to go and hear what the President would say at this critical juncture. I pushed myself through the crowd and got so near to him that I heard every word he said. When Mr. Davis arrived and stood upon the steps of the church a boundless sea of faces was turned toward him, and as far as his voice could reach, and the silence was deep, hushed and profound. Mr. Davis calmly and earnestly said, and the expression on his face carried conviction of his sincerity: 'That the disasters of to-day are temporary. They will be reversed. We will soon come back to establish the capital in this city. The ultimate success of the Southern Confederacy cannot be questioned, but we must have courage and fidelity to meet the situation.' There was no word, look or tone to indicate fear or misgivings. His faith was positively sublime. And when he had finished speaking, I thought of the words of one who witnessed the famous charge of the 600 at Balakhava, 'It is brilliant, but it is not war.'" And Mr. Stephens said, "This is brilliant, but it is not statesmanship."

Governor Sanders, of Louisiana, in accepting the monument erected to Mr. Davis at New Orleans, said:

"Jefferson Davis, in his life and character and in his



statesmanship and bravery, is symbolic of all that is and has been good in Southern manhood. In every place, and under every condition, he proved himself a man. Fighting for his country on bloody fields of the Mexican war, he there showed not only the caliber of his own soul, but typified the valor of Southern troops. It is said by those who know that he made the greatest Secretary of War the United States ever had. As a Senator from the commonwealth of Mississippi, he upheld the best traditions of the South, and added splendor to the name of American statesmanship. When the time came to decide as between the Union as it existed and his State, he delivered an address in the United States Senate that will stand forever as an expression of the highest hope, manhood, courage and patriotism. He of all the great men of the South (and the South had many great men in those days) was selected by all the people to be the President of the Confederate States of America. His was not the glory of leading men on victorious battlefields; he was the chief magistrate of the new nation, and right well, loyally, splendidly and nobly did he what mortal man could do for the nation. For four years the nation struggled, and our troops—the gallant remnants of which are gathered here now—held high in the heavens, and by devotion and courage and bravery unequalled tried to make that flag the eternal symbol of a nation's triumph. But it was not to be. The God of Battles decided otherwise."

✓ At the dedication of the Davis monument at New Orleans, General Bennett H. Young, said:

"Jefferson Davis, misjudged in life and disfranchised until his death, is finding his true place in history, and as sons and daughters of the South we are here to-day to declare this spot sacred and ever to remain sacred in Southern hearts, to again register our veneration for his memory, and to proclaim our love for him because of the sacrifices he made at the call of duty, and to bedeck with fresh laurels and renewed praise, him who bore the deepest humiliation for the Southern people. It fell to the lot of Jefferson Davis to be the leader of his people in the combat which cost untold sacrifice of life and the expenditure of almost countless millions of treasure.

"As the voice of reason speaks to the public heart, there are many sad things in the career of Jefferson Davis that the nation regrets. The cruelties inflicted upon him at Fortress Monroe, the indignities pressed upon him when his emaciated limbs were manacled by force, the hardships upon him in his long confinement, all well-thinking American citizens would blot out if they could. The impartial judgment of mankind will fix the wrong of these things where it belongs. It is a memory of the past, regretful and sad. A prodigious struggle for what both sides believed unalterably right, the greatest war ever waged between English-speaking people, prolonged for four years over a wide area, was bound to bring sacrifices, losses, anguish and desolation, and along with these as products of passion and prejudice, there ensued many things which, in the light of after years, compel regret; but, notwithstanding all these we can say that no nation ever passed through such fiery ordeals and emerged from them with so little that carries sorrow or lingering regrets.

"Mr. Davis suffered as no other Confederate. He was refused the right of citizenship, and he steadily declined to ask it. The same right had been refused Robert E. Lee, and with this before him there was no hope for aught he might seek. The public sentiment of America, we believe, would expurge this from the unchangeable past could it be blotted out, and it ought to be the boast of our common country that only here and there, widely scattered and isolated, can there be found an American who does not deplore the wrongs done to Mr. Davis after the war.

"He met every crisis dauntlessly and measured up to every just expectation and demand of his people.

"At home he was sometimes opposed by his friends; criticized by those from whom he had a right to expect unquestioning support; maligned, misrepresented and misjudged by his enemies, he yet bore in his life a nation's hopes, ambitions and woes, and his magnificent spirit did not quail before the vastness of the issues involved. He never hesitated in the discharge of any obligation, and he refused his countrymen nothing that love, genius and courage could bring, when measured by the highest standard that justice could fix."













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 709 887 8

